

Message Text

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SUBJECT:US POLICY TOWARD EASTERN EUROPE

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF AN ARTICLE BY ROWLAND EVANS AND
ROBERT NOVAK WHICH APPEARED IN APRIL 6 WASHINGTON POST
UNDER TITLE "THE CONSERVATIVES VS. KISSINGER".

1. BEGIN TEXT: TWO WEEKS OF CONFUSED CONTROVERSY OVER
U.S. POLICY ON EASTERN EUROPE HAVE LAID BARE AND FURTHER
HEIGHTENED THE ELECTION-YEAR STRAIN BETWEEN CONSERVATIVE
REPUBLICANS AND SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER.

2. PRESIDENT FORD LAST FRIDAY TRIED TO SATISFY CONSER-
VATIVE DEMANDS THAT HE DISAVOW U.S. APPROVAL OF SOVIET
DOMINION OVER EASTERN EUROPE. ALTHOUGH HE DID SO BY
REPEATING EXACTLY THE SAME WORDS PREVIOUSLY USED BY DR.
KISSINGER, THE PRESIDENT'S CONSERVATIVE BACKERS SEEM
RELATIVELY CONTENT. NEVERTHELESS, THEIR STRUGGLE WITH
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KISSINGER CONTINUES, INTENSIFIED BY THE FACT THAT STATE

DEPARTMENT COUNSELOR HELMUT SONNENFELDT INCREDIBLY INVOKED EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE IN A PRIVATE MEETING LAST WEEK WITH AN INFLUENTIAL RIGHT-WING CONGRESSMAN.

3. THAT STRUGGLE CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM RONALD REAGAN'S NEW ASSAULT ON FORD-KISSINGER FOREIGN POLICY. TO DEFEND AGAINST REAGAN, FORD LOYALISTS WANT GREATER DISTANCE BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND HIS BELEAGUED SECRETARY OF STATE. INDEED, IN A DISTINCTLY MINORITY VIEW, ONE CONSERVATIVE ADVISER TOLD THE PRESIDENT LAST WEEK HE WOULD BE BETTER OFF POLITICALLY WITH JOHN B. CONNALLY AS SECRETARY OF STATE.

4. THE EASTERN EUROPEAN QUESTION, ALWAYS POLITICALLY VOLATILE BECAUSE OF ETHNIC VOTERS, AROSE TWO WEEKS AGO, WITH DISCLOSURE OF SONNENFELDT'S BRIEFING IN LONDON LAST DECEMBER TO AMERICAN AMBASSADORS. THE U.S., HE SAID, SHOULD STRIVE FOR AN "ORGANIC" RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND EASTERN EUROPE TO AVOID WORLD WAR III.

5. STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HAVE VARIOUSLY DERIDED THIS REPORT AS EITHER NOTHING NEW OR NOTHING TRUE, BUT THE REPUBLICAN RIGHT WAS INCENSED. READING ABOUT THE SONNENFELDT DOCTRINE MARCH 22, SEN. JAMES BUCKLEY OF NEW YORK THAT DAY WROTE KISSINGER ASKING WHETHER SONNENFELDT'S REMARKS WERE ACCURATELY REPORTED AND REFLECTED KISSINGER'S OWN VIEWS. A TELEPHONE CALL FROM SONNENFELDT AND A LETTER FROM KISSINGER, CLAIMING DISTORTIONS, DID NOT SATISFY BUCKLEY.

6. MEETING MARCH 25 WITH CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMEN, KISSINGER WAS UPRAUDED OVER THE SONNENFELDT DOCTRINE BY REP. EDWARD J. DERWINSKI OF ILLINOIS, AN ARDENT FORD BOOSTER. A FEW HOURS AFTER THAT BREAKFAST, THE SOMETIMES IMPERIOUS SONNENFELDT PLACED HIS FIRST TELEPHONE CALL EVER TO ED DERWINSKI. PARTLY BECAUSE HE WANTED SONNENFELDT TO STEW OVER THE WEEKEND, DERWINSKI DID NOT RETURN THE CALL THAT WEEK.

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7. MEANWHILE, NONCHALANCE ABOUT THE SONNENFELDT DOCTRINE IN WHITE HOUSE BRIEFINGS CONTRASTED SHARPLY WITH DEEP CONCERN BACKSTAGE. CONSERVATIVE CONGRESSMEN WERE TOLD BY SENIOR AIDES THAT MR. FORD HAD NOT KNOWN ABOUT SONNENFELDT'S BRIEFING BEFORE IT WAS REPORTED (IN THIS COLUMN); UPON READING AN OFFICIAL SUMMARY, HE TOLD AIDES HE COULD SEE HOW WRONG CONCLUSIONS COULD BE DRAWN FROM IT BUT INSISTED THERE IS NO ACQUIESCENCE IN

SOVIET DOMINION.

8. UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE, THE WHITE HOUSE DECIDED ON A PUBLIC DISAVOWAL. INEXPLICABLY, NOTHING WAS SAID DURING MR. FORD'S MARCH 26-27 VISIT TO CALIFORNIA, AN OMISSION THAT BROUGHT FURTHER ESTRANGEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLICAN RIGHT AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

9. ON MARCH 30, SONNENFELDT (HIS TELEPHONE CALL FINALLY RETURNED) VISITED DERWINSKI'S OFFICE AND HANDED HIM A COPY OF KISSINGER'S LETTER TO BUCKLEY. IT NO MORE SATISFIED DERWINSKI THAN IT HAD BUCKLEY. AFTER SONNENFELDT CLAIMED HIS REMARKS WERE MISINTERPRETED, DERWINSKI ASKED TO SEE THE OFFICIAL STATE DEPARTMENT ACCOUNT OF HIS LONDON BRIEFING. BUT SONNENFELDT DEMURRED, WITH AN ASTONISHING CLAIM OF EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE.

10. SINCE COPIES OF THE DOCUMENT WERE LEAKING ALL OVER WASHINGTON AND LONDON, THAT CLAIM TOOK ON A WEIRD CAST. DERWINSKI PLEDGED TO TREAT THE DOCUMENT CONFIDENTIALLY. BUT SONNENFELDT STUCK TO HIS ORDERS.

11. ON APRIL 1, HOWEVER, A COPY LEAKED TO BUCKLEY, WHO WROTE KISSINGER AGAIN ON APRIL 2. THE DOCUMENT "DOES NOT SUPPORT" ANY INTERPRETATION THAT MR. SONNENFELDT URGED "ORGANIC UNION" BETWEEN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE KREMLIN, BUCKLEY WROTE, BUT THAT WAS HIS LAST CONCILIATORY WORD. BUCKLEY DECLARED THAT SONNENFELDT'S REMARKS CONTRADICT KISSINGER'S CLAIMS THAT "OUR POLICY IN NO SENSE ACCEPTS SOVIET DOMINION OF EASTERN EUROPE."

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12. PRIVATE SUGGESTIONS TO U.S. DIPLOMATS, HE WROTE, "THAT WE ADVOCATE SOMETHING SIGNIFICANTLY LESS THAN FULL INDEPENDENCE CAN ONLY UNDERMINE THE SUPPORT OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY AMONG OUR OWN CITIZENS AND OUR ALLIES, AS WELL AS THE AMBIGUITY SUCH A POLICY COMMUNICATES TO OUR ADVERSARIES." DRAWING THAT CONCLUSION FROM THE LEAKED DOCUMENT, BUCKLEY CHALLENGED KISSINGER TO SAY SPECIFICALLY HOW SONNENFELDT'S BRIEFING WAS INCORRECTLY REPORTED.

13. IN MILWAUKEE APRIL 2, MR. FORD WAS INTENT ON SATISFYING THE RIGHT, DECLARING AT A LUNCHEON WITH ETHNICS THAT HE HAD NO "SECRET POLICY" ON EASTERN EUROPE. MR. FORD THEN REPEATED VERBATIM AS HIS OWN STATEMENT THE WORDS IN KISSINGER'S LETTER TO BUCKLEY THAT BOTH BUCKLEY

AND DERWINSKI HAD REJECTED AS INADEQUATE.

14. DERWINSKI, AN ELECTED FORD CONVENTION DELEGATE, IS NOW SATISFIED WITH THE PRESIDENT BUT CALLS KISSINGER A WHEELER-DEALER WORKING BEHIND MR. FORD'S BACK. DERWINSKI WILL PRESS BOTH KISSINGER AND SONNENFELDT ON EASTERN EUROPE WHEN THEY NEXT TESTIFY BEFORE THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE. BUCKLEY, NEUTRAL IN THE FORD-REAGAN CONTEST, IS PRESSING FOR CONFIRMATION OR DENIAL OF WHAT SONNENFELDT SAID IN LONDON. BUT WHAT IS REALLY AT STAKE IN THIS STRUGGLE FOR THE SOUL OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY TRANSCENDS BOTH EASTERN EUROPE AND ETHNIC POLITICS. END TEXT. KISSINGER

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